

America. I regret that I could not join them at that time and now I wish to submit my own remarks. These are very tough times for rural districts such as the one I represent in the northeastern corner of North Carolina. It is the fourth poorest Congressional District in the U.S. 24 percent of the people I represent and 36 percent of the children live below the poverty line. Those are chilling statistics.

There are enormous racial disparities in poverty rates, and they are only getting larger. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 25.8 percent—one in four—of all black Americans live in poverty compared to an overall national poverty rate of 14.3 percent. This compares to 25.3 percent poverty among Hispanics, 12.5 percent among Asians and 9.4 percent among whites.

The poverty problem in America is getting worse; not better. In 2006, the overall poverty rate was 12.6 percent, and in 2008, the overall poverty rate was 13.2 percent. The poverty rate now is the highest it has been since 1994.

Other indicators are equally alarming. More Americans than ever find themselves in need of food. In 2009, 14.7 percent of U.S. households had difficulty providing enough food for family members at some point during the year. This is the highest level observed since the U.S.D.A. started monitoring food security in 1995. From 2007 to 2009, the number of households using food pantries rose by 44 percent from 3.9 to 5.6 million households.

Similar trends of racial disparities exist amongst individuals lacking health insurance coverage. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 21 percent—one in five—black Americans are uninsured. This compares to 12 percent among whites and 17.2 percent among Asians. The number of uninsured children has risen to 7.5 million. In total, over 50.7 million people, or 16.7 percent of the country's population lack health insurance coverage—a dramatic increase from 46.3 million in 2008.

Poverty, hunger, and suffering are increasing—especially for people of color—during these difficult economic times. These are sad and terrible realities that a distressing number of my constituents face.

My district has many vivid and unfortunate illustrations of poverty: nearly one in 20 homes in some counties do not have a telephone or a kitchen, and many of my constituents are still living without indoor plumbing. As the national numbers show, eastern North Carolina is not unique in its poverty or suffering. People are poor, getting poorer, and are largely being ignored by policy makers all across the country.

Recent budget plans offered by the other side of the aisle would cut spending from most safety net programs, such as Medicare, Social Security, and food security programs, while increasing defense spending. If these misguided plans are passed into law, the impacts would be felt by all Americans and we would face a second Great Recession.

As we face an impending debt crisis and unsustainable levels of spending, we must balance our ongoing commitments to job creation and tax code reform while ensuring changes are not made at the expense of children, minorities, and seniors. We have a moral obligation to fight for the millions of Americans who are overlooked and suffering each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, we must work together toward developing comprehensive strategies to eradi-

cate the growing poverty and hunger in the world's wealthiest nation.

IN HONOR OF THE AMERICAN VOLUNTEER GROUP "FLYING TIGERS"

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 21, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the American Volunteer Group (AVG) known in China as "The Flying Tigers," on the occasion of its 70th anniversary.

In 1941, Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek authorized retired U.S. Lieutenant General Claire Lee Chennault to create a group of American pilots and airmen to assist and train Chinese aerial forces. With President Franklin D. Roosevelt's permission, Armed Forces members were allowed to volunteer for this assignment. In total, 97 pilots and 185 ground personnel from the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps volunteered.

The group faced many initial challenges. To start, the group had 100 P-40 fighter planes (painted with the now-famous "shark's face" nose), many of which were in less than ideal condition. Additionally, the group had only four months to train and prepare before action started. However, the AVG was able to establish three separate squadrons: Adam and Eve, the Panda Bears, and Hell's Angels.

The group first saw action on December 20, 1941, just 12 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. While U.S. air forces and the Royal Air Force were generally unsuccessful against the Japanese at the war's onset, the AVG was notably successful, largely due to Chennault's innovative fighting tactics.

For their efforts, at the group's 50th anniversary, the AVG was rewarded veteran status for service in World War II. The following year they were also rewarded with the Presidential Unit Citation. In 1992, each member of the AVG ground personnel was awarded the Bronze Star and pilots were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring the American Volunteer Group "Flying Tigers," whose bravery and courage in the face of incredible difficulties will inspire future pilots and military servicemen and women for years to come.

COMMEMORATING THE 37TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TURKISH OCCUPATION OF CYPRUS

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 21, 2011

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call my colleagues' attention to the 37th anniversary of the Turkish tragic invasion of Cyprus. Turkey's unlawful occupation, which began on this day in 1974, left thousands of innocent Greek Cypriot civilians without their homes, their land, and their families. It is crucial for us to commemorate this unfortunate situation and assist the people of Cyprus in reaching a solution.

Many of the Cypriot generation who suffered the invasion have not lived to see justice or a resolution to this conflict. Although many of the survivors have had the opportunity to return to their homes on the northern side of the island, it was only to discover them occupied by Turkish settlers.

Only Turkey recognizes the occupied northern side of the country as a Turkish Cypriot state, but it does not even provide a valid standard of living to their own citizens. This was made evident through the recent demonstrations by Turkish Cypriots who have displayed their own dissatisfaction with the Turkish occupation.

Thirty-seven years after the invasion, the Turkish government continues to throw obstacles in the path to peace. Instead of compromising, Turkey threatens a deadlock on relations between Turkey and the European Union if the Republic of Cyprus takes over the presidency of the European Union in July 2012. It is clear that Cypriots of all kinds are ready for peace, but how can peace be reached when Turkey will not even accept Cyprus as a member of the European Union? The time has come for Turkey to end their threats, withdraw their troops, and return the territory that is not rightfully theirs. That way, the Cypriots—and the Cypriots alone—can make the decisions affecting their future.

DEBT REDUCTION PLANS EFFECTS ON POVERTY

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 21, 2011

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the devastating effects of the Republican agenda on the poor. Debt reduction plans that gut social safety net programs will put millions of low-income families at risk.

According to the U.S. Census, the number of people in poverty in 2009—43.6 million—is the largest number in the 51 years for which poverty estimates have been published.

In my home state of Ohio, 15.2 percent of the state's population lived in poverty in 2009. Among African-American seniors, 67 percent are at or below the poverty line, and 12 percent of African Americans rely on Medicare to survive.

Cuts to Medicaid will disproportionately affect African-American communities. In 2009, 27 percent of African-Americans—approximately 10 million people, including 6 million children—were covered by Medicaid.

When everyone talks about the budget, all you hear about are numbers. Behind those numbers are people: hard-working Americans or the unemployed or those who are just getting by.

There is an urgent need to resolve the debt ceiling issue and it is beyond irresponsible not to raise the debt limit. We all agree that we have to responsibly reduce the deficit, but not on the backs of the most vulnerable. My job in Congress is to be a voice for the voiceless and I will fight to help these Americans by opposing the Republican budget.